

Section by Section Analysis of H.R. 1674 United States Tsunami Warning and Education Act

Section 1. Short Title.

United State Tsunami Warning and Education Act

Section 2. Purposes.

Describes the purposes of the Act: (1) to improve tsunami detection, forecasting, warnings, notification, preparedness and mitigation both in the U.S. and around the world; (2) to enhance and modernize the existing Pacific tsunami warning system and to expand detection and warning systems to the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico; (3) to improve tsunami mapping, modeling, research and assessment efforts; (4) to improve and increase education and outreach activities; (5) to provide technical and other assistance to international efforts to establish regional tsunami warning systems in vulnerable areas worldwide, including the Indian Ocean region; and (6) to improve Federal, State, and international coordination for tsunami and other coastal hazard warnings and preparedness.

Section 3. Tsunami Forecasting and Warning Program.

Requires NOAA to operate a program to provide tsunami forecasting and warnings for the Pacific Ocean region, and for the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico regions.

The components of the program shall include: tsunami warning centers; forecasting capabilities, based on measurements, models and maps; a cooperative effort among NOAA, USGS, and NSF to provide seismic information; and the capability to for the rapid and reliable dissemination of tsunami warnings to States and communities.

Directs the National Weather Service to develop requirements for the equipment used to forecast tsunamis, including how the equipment will be integrated into other United States and global environmental observing systems and a plan for the transfer of technology from research into operations. Requires the National Weather Service to submit reports to Congress on how it will integrate the equipment and on the technology transfer plan. Also requires the National Weather Service to notify Congress when tsunami forecasting capabilities are impaired for more than three months due to equipment or contractor problems.

Requires the Administrator to enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate and provide recommendation on how to improve NOAA's tsunami detection, forecast and warning activities.

Section 4. Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program.

Directs the National Weather Service to conduct a community-based tsunami hazard mitigation program to improve tsunami preparedness of at-risk areas. Establishes a coordinating committee of Federal and State officials, which shall: develop a plan for ensuring wide participation in the program; determine how funds will be allocated; and provide recommendations to increase resiliency of vulnerable communities. Specifically, the program will: use NOAA models and maps to assess vulnerable areas; promote and improve community outreach and education networks; and integrate tsunami preparedness and mitigation programs into ongoing hazard warnings and planning.

Section 5. Tsunami Research Program.

Requires NOAA to establish a tsunami research program to develop detection, forecasting, communication and mitigation tools and technologies. Directs the program to work with the National Weather Service on ways to transfer the research into operations.

Section 6. Global Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Network.

Directs NOAA to provide technical assistance and training to the international community toward the development of a fully functional global tsunami forecast and warning system. Establishes the International Tsunami Information Center to provide information and advice to nations around the world to improve tsunami preparedness.

Section 7. Authorization of Appropriations.

Provides \$30 million for each of fiscal years 2006-2008 to carry out the act. Specifies that of any funds appropriated for activities under this act, 70 percent should be used for the tsunami forecast and warning systems under section three and section six, 20 percent should be used for the tsunami hazard mitigation program under section four, and 10 percent should be for the tsunami research program under section five.